

Donor/Father

The doctor who recruited you
is dead and buried. The files
if there were some
have been shredded.
This was pre-computer
but no matter: I am
Nancy Drew, and need to
nab your lost particulars.

Tell me, how much
did they give you? Did it go
toward rent, med school tuition
or something more like
jeans and beer,
a date, a haircut?
Were you issued a room,
rumpled '79 Playboy
and in that freeze-frame
did you realize
you were making someone
who might feel untethered?

Were there forms
where you fudged answers?
What was asked of
your medical, sexual, psychiatric
history, and what
did you tell?
Am I full of disease
trailing back generations?
Am I gay because
of you? Do you
share my Brillo hair?
Are you where I got my
depression, and these thighs
with strange pockets of fat
where my legs meet?

Are you Middle Eastern? Hispanic?
Strangers swear I am, like they know
what I'm too dense to uncover.
Are you married now
with real kids? Did you ever

tell them? Listen, I grew up
a mile from your med school.
We might have stood
in the same drugstore aisle,
stewed in the same traffic,
crept past each other.

Send the CliffsNotes
to what happened:
what kind of doctor
you became, if you got
rich or addicted or
wrecked your credit or died,
say, in a crash in '84
or of cancer in '92
and we never knew.
How *could* we know?
I'm sorry.

Do you ever think
of when you needed cash?
I don't mean this to be
difficult. I'd just like to
meet you even once—
log your build and gait,
texture of your hair,
span of your voice,
shape of your toenails
and teeth.

I'm old now.
I don't need
a dad much.
We could just get coffee
then return to our lives
like nothing happened.
Because really
nothing did.

Donor/Father II

You could be a surgeon
or Republican or pedophile.
You might've gone vegan,
love Brooks Brothers, hum operas.

You do hot yoga. You're a therapist
who takes no insurance. Or
they know your name at Hooters
where you go to watch the game
in stonewashed Wal-Mart jeans.

All of this. None of it.

What if you think
the poor all want hand-outs,
the gays will wreck marriage,
women are impossible,
Obama's a Muslim?

You could be a dirtbag
sprawled on two subway seats
looking through pregnant women,
picking your teeth and
flicking your findings
to the floor.

You might have hugged me
growing up, swapped sections of
the Times when I was teenaged,
traveled for work, sent a postcard
though you were gone just two days.

You'd have lent me your
scarf while skating at Christmas,
called me at college,
helped with the heavy stuff.
made it look easy.

You could've done time
for tax evasion. Made eggs
on Sundays. Been a Call Center
Representative. Applied
for a Guggenheim. Invented
the Snuggie.

Or you're just ordinary:
flawed but with merits,
worth talking to.
Call sometime,
would you? I'd like
to find out.